



## **NEWS**

### **Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2<sup>nd</sup> District**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS FOR BETTER TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS TO PROTECT CHILDREN**

***He urges the Dept. of Children & Family Services to seek out the  
best practices currently in use to help save children's lives***

**LOS ANGELES** – Prompted by three deaths in a month of children whose mistreatment had been referred to the county Department of Children and Family Services, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today called for exploring new technology that would improve how agencies share potentially life-saving information.

While applauding the department's efforts to upgrade its current data system, the Supervisor noted there have been dramatic advances in technology since the system was introduced in 1995.

"We are using old technology trying to confront new challenges," Ridley-Thomas said at today's Board of Supervisors meeting. "I think we can do a better job by being not only preventive, but pre-emptive. It's time to seriously look to the best practices currently in operation to do our job and do it better."

The Supervisor was responding to a report by the department to the Board on progress to enhance the County's inter-agency Family and Child Index (FCI) system and the implementation of a series of short, mid, and long-term goals to improve the County's Family and Child Index (FCI).

FCI technology allows various County departments to share information regarding children services, health services, law enforcement, mental health services, probation, schools and social service agencies. The system is designed primarily for information sharing, not prevention and early intervention.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas added that the FCI system can serve as a bridge to new and more effective technology.

The Board was also provided with an update by County Counsel on the status of new legislation proposed by the Board to enhance the current FCI system with data mining, including any legal issues that might be associated with full implementation of the system.

On June 30, 2009, the Board of Supervisors directed the County's Chief Executive Officer to report back in 30 days on the implementation of a series of short, mid, and long-term goals to enhance and improve the County's Family and Child Index (FCI).

Other concerns addressed in the report to the Board include:

- Data components and coordination and application development, which would need to be included in such a system;
- How development of this system could be expedited;
- Assurance that County agencies and employees are adequately trained to properly use and promptly enter and update accurate information into the
- FCI database;
- A timeline for implementation of data mining solutions to enhance FCI, which includes an expedited release of a Request for Proposals (RFP);
- A proposed budget for full-implementation of the plan;
- Outcomes of information-sharing models from other jurisdictions that serve at-risk children and families through locally provided prevention and intervention services.

The Board instructed that all efforts to implement the initiatives be communicated regularly to the Board on a timely basis, to ensure the well being and protection of the children within the care of the Department of Children and Family Services.

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